

What Matters to You?

Introduction

These brief essays are designed to help you identify issues you care about. After you identify an issue that matters to you, that issue will be the content you explore as you develop skills in researching and collaborating. Your final project in this class will be a website that showcases your thinking and research about your chosen issue. As a senior you will have a major project that will involve both academic research and practical action on a topic you choose. By the time you are a senior, you may choose a different topic, but it is our intention in this class to provide a basis for that senior project.

Instructions

Essay 1 - What matters to you up close?

1. Get a glass of tea or a Coke. Go sit on the back porch and think. Think about your family and your friends and what is going on in their lives. Who is having what challenges? Who is on the cusp of doing what great thing? Notice the patterns you see. Notice your reactions to what you see. Fear? Outrage? Hopefulness? Doodle. Mull things over. Don't lock onto the first thought that crosses your mind. Consider many. Then write a one page essay that addresses this topic: When I consider the lives of those around me, I notice _____ and it matters because _____.

2. What matters here is the issue or idea you choose to wrestle with, not so much the particular individual whose life brings the issue to the forefront of your mind. Also, please remember you are writing to an audience of your peers that will actually read your work. Be protective of people in the way you write, especially if you find yourself thinking and writing about problems affecting people's lives. Do not write, "Johnny is a drunk and it matters because he hurt himself the other night and blah blah blah." Rather say, "As I look at my family and friends, I notice alcohol use by some teens. I notice these effects blah blah blah and wonder these things blah blah blah. Blur identifying characteristics if necessary to protect those whose situations prompt your thinking.

3. Write a ½ - 1 page essay on your chosen topic in **Google Docs!** Name your paper Last Name Essay 1 (ex. Moore Essay 1)